

DIPLOMANIA

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A DOZEN YEARS OF "DIPLOMACY" by Allan B. Calhamer

There is a lot to talk about after twelve years of "Diplomacy". People frequently ask me how I came to create the game. Something this complicated undoubtedly springs from a person's total experience, but there are main lines and points which I can recall. I got an early introduction to games, to maps, and to history, and spent a lot of time making up games.

At the end of World War II, I came across an article on "post-war planning" which reviewed the European diplomacy of the period 1815-1914 and argued that coalitions tend to shift and form so as to oppose the most powerful or most aggressive elements. Later, when high school debaters were considering the issue of world government, I ran across the argument that external governments can serve the function of checking a rampant government which is not sufficiently checked internally.

About this time a friend of mine and I attempted to play a game which would model the intanglements of European history. As we had only two players, you can imagine that the results were not very successful.

In college I came in contact with the remarkable book Origins of the World War, by S. B. Fay. This book explored the secret alliance diplomacy leading up to the war in great detail. After the war nearly all the governments involved threw open the secret correspondence of that period, offering an opportunity to the observer which may never come again. I was impressed by the importance of personal contact and personal decision-making, and of alternatives that were not chosen, and of individual failures and blunders. All of this is in contrast to the determinism frequently implied by generalizations about history. I think the mysterious "semi-determinism" of life has been pretty well captured by the game of Diplomacy.

I also took a course in political geography under Prof. Whittlesley, which course influenced the relationship among country, military forces, and supply centers which went into the game. Thus we find that power arises from resources found at specific points, but is dealt out as the country sees fit. If it is not so dealt as to protect the resources, however, they may pass into the invisible envelope of another country's influence, and be dealt by someone else to some other faraway point.

I began devising the game in 1953 and completed the first set in 1954. Armies were blocks two inches high, painted with three horizontal stripes taken from the colors of the country's flag in 1914. Fleets were $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and the board was quite large. In the first two games, negotiation was entirely by written notes passed from player to player at the board. Reading the notes after the game was most interesting. Verbal negotiation, however, was faster and gave the players a chance to move around, which is an advantage in a game of this duration.

In 1958 I went to work in a research laboratory which was interested in the game as a possible research tool. For a variety of reasons, that objective was never achieved. The game, however, was played frequently there, and the players, who were good game players generally, did a great deal of analysis and contributed

People have sometimes asked why I chose the scenario of 1914. That period was a period in which there were several Great Powers which were more or less equal in power. It was a period of alliances and coalitions. It was also a period, as I have indicated above, that we know a lot about today. Other good scenarios that have been tried are Ancient Greece and 12th or 13th century Asia. The evidence is that there was quite a little diplomacy, aimed at coalition-forming for the largest purposes, throughout Asia at that time. Europe between the Wars is not so good, because the break-up of Austria-Hungary, the contraction of Turkey, etc., create too great a power vacuum in the Balkans. One game based on the world as of 1940 had to resort to Brazil as a great power, to balance the board. The destructiveness of present-day warfare makes it very difficult to model so as to represent the choices at all realistically.

Also, I believe it would be a mistake to model the present, because simple and unrealistic conclusions might be accepted uncritically. Something relevant to the present day can probably be learned from the existing game, but the required carry-over guards against hasty conclusions.

I chose a physical rather than a political map because a physical map looks more like the Earth itself.

"Diplomacy" seems to contain a number of elements which are original or at least very unusual. A workable multi-player military game is unusual. If the game employed the rule in checkers or chess, that a player may not pass his move, it would be slowed up badly by players who were inattentive or indecisive. The rule that a piece not ordered simply stands, and the rule that illegal orders are treated as orders to stand, are important in keeping the game moving. Also these rules amount to a mild penalty, which induces the players to remain attentive.

The effect of moving all the pieces simultaneously tends to be realistic, and also keeps things moving. In about five minutes as many as 34 moves may take place, and the situation may change quite a little bit as those 34 pieces move. It is good that the moves are fairly restricted in view of the number that take place at one time. The moves have to be complicated enough to permit of deception in the negotiations; beyond that, additional complications tend to detract from the diplomatic side of the game. For the same reason, it is good that each player have only a few pieces.

The interaction between land and sea is not dealt with very well in any other game of which I know. Usually the game is either a land game or a sea game, the opposite element serving only as a boundary, or as the wings from which pieces come onto the stage. In "Diplomacy" sea power is as important as land power. It operates against landward targets, by supporting military forces (not physically represented but assumed to be there) in actual occupation of coastal areas. Engagement on the high seas occurs infrequently, and almost always because one side is moving to attack landward targets and the other is trying to prevent it.

A country's capabilities depend very much on how her force is divided between armies and fleets. These capabilities in turn reveal a great deal about her intentions and consequently her trustworthiness. The way in which the earth-space represented on the board is divided into land and sea is very important. The water areas of the board are divided into two distinct parts, the northern and the Mediterranean. A country which has an absolute majority of fleets in one of these parts is likely to be able to sweep everything on those coasts, first by taking the supply centers which are most exposed to seaward attack, then by raising either type of piece and mopping up. There are 14 supply centers bordering each of these water areas, Spain being counted twice. There are only seven wholly inland supply centers. An absolute majority of armies in the large land area con-

place during the retreat). Most players think there should also be an exception permitting a country to exchange the positions of its own army and fleet, but under the rules these two stand each other off. Rules covering the situation in which two armies wish to retreat into the same province never even got into the rulebook. The rule I use is that they must write the retreats, and if they choose the same space they must write again but may not go to that space. The result frequently is that one country may annihilate the piece of the other and then retreat, because one of them frequently has only one possible retreat. Sometimes both are limited to one space only, in which case they annihilate each other. When these pieces both come from the same country, the player involved raises an awful yell, but I do not like a special rule to cover that situation only. The real problem is what to do if the victim demands a look at the rule book. I have sometimes gotten by in the past by denying that I had a copy.

Some time ago I suggested new rules for the six-man game. I have tested these recently, and I am very much in favor of them. My suggestion was to drop Italy as a player, rather than Turkey; to permit moves to Italian places and use of the Italian supply centers, but to have the Italian pieces stand in place to defend themselves, without supporting each other. Such is just what would happen if the Italian player started the game and dropped out before the first move, anyway. It is good historically (Italy was the last country unified) and the feel of the resulting game is almost identical to the seven-man game.

I have not yet tested my new suggestion for the five-man game, in which Germany also is treated as Italy above.

I have been asked about the proposed new federation. I have no personal objection to its use of the name "Diplomacy", but Games Research would like to consider the matter, and I will back them in this matter. I would be willing to help such a federation in any convenient way, but I would not want to give the impression that it had some sort of official or monopolistic position.

I am really more interested in vitality than in organization, and it is just in that respect that I feel most optimistic today (knock on wood). Diplomacy, like its fans, may be a little disorganized, but both have a certain vitality that bodes well for the future.

(This concludes Mr. Calhamer's long, interesting and informative article. We understand he has sent the same article to John Boardman, so we expect that you will shortly be reading it in John's fine magazine, GRAUSTARK. We are also planning to reprint it in THE GAMESMAN #4, to ensure that it received the widest possible circulation. Actually, when we received it we were tempted to hold it for THE GAMESMAN #4, but we decided it was too timely in light of the recent rule- and IDF-controversies (see elsewhere in this issue of DIPLOMANIA) and should see publication as soon as possible. Hence its publication here in DIPLOMANIA #12.

We hope the readers will comment profusely upon Mr. Calhamer's article -- fill up the nascent DIPLOMANIA letter-column with your erudite remarks. Ask any questions you may have concerning the article, and (hopefully) Mr. Calhamer or one of the leaders in the Postal Diplomacy field will reply to them.

We have a few remarks we would like to make before we close; we hope that Mr. Calhamer and/or some of our readers will see fit to comment upon them.

We have always wondered why the year "1901" was chosen as the first game-year in Diplomacy, when the map, or "scenario", represented Europe as it was in the year 1914? Why not use a 1901 map of Europe (see the map for DIPLOMANIA's 9-man game

the rulebook rules we Gamesmasters sometimes justify our decisions with statements like, "Well, we believe that this is what Calhamer actually intended in this situation." So, what did you intend in these situations? From your article it is apparent that you intended that the rulebook be followed literally, except, as you say, in cases where such literal interpretation would ruin the game. The question of this "literal" interpretation of the rules is one of the major bones of contention between Diplomacy Gamesmasters and players today; the "purists" argue for a strict and literal interpretation of the rulebook, no matter what the outcome, and that they do this because only Calhamer and Games Research have the power to change the rules; others argue that the rules should be those which make the game most interesting and enjoyable for those who are playing it -- that if the players in a specific game wish to play with a variant rule or rules, they will be glad to accommodate these players -- that this can be done in individual games regardless of what the written rules say, as long as the players in these individual games know about these variant rules in advance and approve of them. These Gamesmasters who run variant games are not trying to rewrite the rulebook, or to force all of the other Diplomacy players and Gamesmasters to come into the fold and play/run their games under the same variant rules. They are simply treating Diplomacy as "fun", and running whatever variants the players in their magazines want.

We in DIPLOMANIA have experimented with a few variant rules in our Regular games, and we have eliminated all but two from our "house-rules" in the magazine in which our Regular games are run (some of these variant rules are still in use in the early Regular games, as the games were started under these rules and we are reluctant to change the rules in the middle of the game). The two rules we still use are the one which states that, to win, a player must have 18 (or more) units on the board at the completion of a Winter season (instead of the rulebook rule that a player wins when he has a majority of the units on the board), and the "stand-by player" rule (who submits moves, at the Gamesmaster's request, for a country whose player fails to do so, without regard to alliances, etc, considering only the situation as it appears on the board at the time the moves are due). This "stand-by player" rule is in lieu of the rulebook rule that the units of a player who fails to submit his moves on time simply stand in place; this rule is, of course, peculiar to Postal Diplomacy -- it would be better to keep the rulebook rule for across-the-board play.

We might add here that the Calhamer article seems to be directed mostly towards across-the-board play, rather than postal play. We would be most interested in seeing one of you "postalites" out there (John Boardman? John McCallum? Anyone?) write an article dealing chiefly with postal play -- how it differs from across-the-board play -- the advantages and disadvantages of postal play compared to across-the-board play, etc. We would also like to see an article (or a letter, written for publication) dealing with one of the most distinctive features of postal play -- written "propaganda" -- something like, "The Use and Misuse of Propaganda in Postal Diplomacy", or some such approach. We would also welcome letters concerning the use of "black" propaganda (i.e., propaganda written by one player to be published under the name of another) in Postal Diplomacy.

Briefly, to finish this "editorial" -- Re the one case you give, Mr. Calhamer, where the written rules say something you didn't intend: most Gamesmasters use what you say you did intend in the form of a rule known as "Konig's Rule". Re the rule you say you use when orders are written for two armies to retreat to the same province (where one army, at least, has another retreat open to it): we like -- and we wish this rule could be adopted for postal play. Re your suggested new rules for the 6-man game: DIPLOPHOBIA has a 6-man Team game going with your suggested rules, but we have never tried a straight 6-man game; nor have we ever tried a 5-man game. How about it out there? We'll run 5- and 6-man games, under the revised rules, if anyone is interested. Re the proposed IDF: see our discussion of the IDF which follows this article. --ed.))

Section 6 -- Provided for a rating system for Active members participating in regular games in Charter Members, but established no procedures for such a system.

Section 7 -- Provided for a monthly IDF magazine, to be called The Journal of the I.D.F., and itemized some of its contents.

Sections 8 through 13 -- Gave the Judicial Council power to exercise judicial review over the decisions of the Executive Council; provided for an annual list of Active and Charter Members and their addresses; provided for the suspension from membership of a Member whose dues are more than two months in arrears; provided for the maintenance of the IDF archives (one copy of each issue of each Charter Member, etc.); provided for the Chartering of individuals as IDF Gamesmasters for the purpose of running tournaments, across-the-board games, etc.; stated the composition of the IDF election ballots.

Discussion

We think the IDF, if organized as proposed above, would be over-organized! We believe a better approach would be a more informal one: begin with a "Council of Gamesmasters", the purpose of which would be principally one of discussion and rule-interpretation. Perhaps a "Council of Players" might also be formed -- or, a "Council of Players and Gamesmasters". No dues, no regulatory power -- only the right of advice (and the psychological weight which would attend the utterance of such a "voice of experience"). Start with a very loose organization -- a closer-knit organization will gradually come about through necessity. Why rush it? The proposed IDF is too formal, and sounds too dictatorial -- we doubt that the approach indicated in the proposals will be successful in "unifying" the field of postal Diplomacy -- more likely, several rival "Federations" will spring up, all claiming to be "it".

We can understand the reluctance of Games Research to give its sanction to such a proposal -- and that of Mr. Calhamer, too. Take Section 3a, under Article IV of the draft Constitution, for example: "It ((The Executive Council)) may write, publish, and amend as necessary a set of official interpretations of the Rules of Diplomacy; these interpretations shall be binding upon the Membership and upon Charter Members. . . ." This scares us! We can sympathize with Mr. Calhamer's statement that". . . I would not want to give the impression that it ((the Federation)) had some sort of official or monopolistic position". Section 3a certainly sounds "official", monopolistic, and dictatorial! How about some "official" explanations and interpretations of the Rules of Diplomacy, Games Research and Mr. Calhamer? Ideally, to be "official", such interpretations should come from you, and not from the players. Also, San Diego Gamesmasters, you say these interpretations shall be "binding" upon the Membership and upon Charter Members; does this mean the Members may not play in games in which the IDF interpretations are not followed, and that the Charter Members (it would be much less confusing simply to refer to the "Charter Members" as "Charter Magazines") may not include such games? How are you going to enforce this? And what about Charter Magazines in which games are already in progress using interpretations other than those decided upon by the IDF -- are you going to make us change rules in the middle of the game?

Also, how far is all this going to go? Are you going to interfere in any way with the editorial policies of the various games magazines? Are you going to insist on specific lengths of time between move-deadlines? How many (and what) seasons shall constitute each game-year? Game-fees to be charged by magazines? Methods of choosing (and replacing) players? If the Federation is going to be effective it is going to have to have some control over magazine policies beyond those pertaining only to the rules of the game -- and this will not sit well with a lot of Gamesmaster/editors (this writer included)! If the IDF does achieve "official" sanction, where will IDF control end and Gamesmaster/editor freedom begin? It would be most difficult to draw a hard-and-fast line!

A few more points, briefly: We don't like the provision for the assumption of the office of President by the Secretary-Treasurer (in addition to his own duties) in case the office of President should be vacated -- it makes the Secretary-Treasurer too powerful in such an event, by the holding down of two offices. Why not simply have the Directors elect one of their members as interim President, and run one Director short until the next general election? We also wonder whether the proposed Judicial Council is really necessary -- couldn't its function be performed by the Executive Council? Here is one spot you could cut back a bit on your over-organization. In the proposed numbering system, what is the "series number" for? We also wonder what control, if any, the IDF intends exercising over variant games? In addition, must a player be an Active Member to play in a Chartered Magazine? Must an Active Member play in a Chartered Magazine only? We also feel your annual fee for Charter Magazines may be too high.

We are a bit uneasy about the By-Laws covering "insured games". We like the idea of "insured games" -- but we wonder if the IDF knows what it may be letting itself in for. The \$1 fee per game, we understand, is payed by the Gamesmaster. We feel the fee may be too low, in view of the possible expense to which the IDF might be put in continuing and completing an insured game should the occasion arise. Suppose, for example, we made Charter members out of our four game-magazines in the DIPLOMANIA family, and they all contained their full compliment of 10 games each. That is \$20 in Charter Fees and \$40 in "insurance" fees (a prohibitive sum to most Gamesmasters, already). Then we immediately ceased publication of these magazines. The IDF would be stuck with 40 games in their early stages, and \$60 fees with which to pay more than \$200 expenses required to continue and complete the games. We, on the other hand, would have pocketed \$150/- in game-fees, and been completely freed from the weight of these 40 games. So we could never Gamesmaster another game? So what? It seems to us that, through the "insurance" system, the IDF might actually encourage some Gamesmasters to do just what we suggested above -- insure their games and then quit publishing their 'zines! The IDF could easily end up making a shambles out of Postal Diplomacy!

Basically, we like the idea of an "IDF" -- only we think its role should be advisory, and not regulatory. We think the IDF could charge dues (\$1 per person per year would be sufficient) and publish a small monthly (or bimonthly) magazine, the function of which would be to publish and disseminate general information on postal Diplomacy, such as a Directory of games in progress, a Directory of Diplomacy magazines, and the like. It could also serve the very valuable function of liason between Calhamer and Games Research, and the postal Diplomacy world, through the publication of statements, explanations, and interpretations of the rules made "officially" by Games Research and/or Calhamer. It could also keep us up to date on Diplomacy news in general. And it could publish non-compulsory guidelines for postal play in general, as well as for the organization of clubs, tournaments, and the like, and the editing and publishing of the Diplomacy magazines. These guidelines would be of particular value to new Gamesmasters coming onto the scene. But whatever you all do with the IDF, keep it loose!

DA

FANTASIA players attention: FAA -- underline Dol Guldur to Lorien (Mordor) and add LAIRE, 3003 retreat for MORDOR as follows: DA Dol Guldur retreats to Celebrant. FCD -- underline SA Amon Sul to Imladris. ENC --- game cancelled. FGC -- game cancelled. FHD -- Jim Latimer (address on roster in F#1) replaces Joe Haldeman as DAKOTAS. FIE and FJF -- rosters full; maps and rules to be distributed; first-move deadlines Friday, August 12; Gamesmaster for both games, Don Miller.

Free to all players in games in FANTASIA, DIPLOPHOBIA, DIPLOMANIA, and SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS; to others, 10 issues for \$1. Send to: D. Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Md., 20906. S, Sample; T, Trade; P, Player; W, Subber.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY FEDERATION (Proposed)

A little over a month ago we received a letter from San Diego, bearing the names of Robert B. Cline, Harold A. Naus, C. F. von Metzke, Rodney C. Walker, and Robert J. Ward (all of whom were, at the time, Gamesmasters in the San Diego area), requesting comments on and outlining the procedures for eventual ratification of an "International Diplomacy Federation" (IDF). (Robert Ward has since questioned the fact that his name was on this letter, in lieu of the fact he had no advance copy of the proceedings or by-laws of the proposal.) Attached to this letter were a draft Constitution and By-Laws for the IDF. We shall attempt here to briefly outline the IDF proposals, and comment upon them as necessary.

Draft Constitution

Article I -- Stated the name and purpose of the organization, the purpose being "to serve as a coordinating body for Diplomacy activities and related matters".

Article II -- Defined the two classes of Federation membership: Active (dues-paying players) and Charter (Diplomacy publications the editors of which pay an annual Charter Fee).

Article III -- Stated the duties and method of election of the Federation officers, elective officers being a President, seven Directors, and a Secretary-Treasurer, and appointive officers being a Record Keeper and whomever else the President sees fit to appoint to help him in the discharge of his duties.

Article IV -- Stated the duties and composition of the Executive Council (all elective officers as voting and appointive officers as non-voting members). Its duties included such activities as writing, publishing, and amending a set of "official" interpretations of the Rules of Diplomacy; insuring Diplomacy games; making provision for the continuation and completion of insured games where the magazine in which they were being played ceases publication; levying dues upon membership to cover its operation costs; publishing an IDF magazine; establishing guidelines for the formation of local Diplomacy clubs and a general but non-compulsory code for Diplomacy magazines; adopting By-Laws for the IDF; and the like.

Article V (also numbered IV in the draft) -- Provided for IDF elections of officers.

Article VI (numbered V in the draft) -- stated the duties and composition of a Judicial Council and the method of election of the Council. Members were to be Gamesmasters (five) of Charter Members, and duties were primarily the resolution of disputes concerning the interpretation of the Rules of Diplomacy.

Article VII (numbered VI in the draft) -- Stated procedures for adoption of By-Laws for the Federation.

Article VIII (numbered VII in the draft) -- Stated procedures for ratification and amendment of the Constitution.

Draft By-Laws

Section 1 -- Stated procedures for assuring continuation and completion of insured games if the magazine in which they are being carried should cease publication.

Section 2 -- Set dues of Active members (players) at \$2 per year.

Section 3 -- Set annual Charter Fee (magazine "membership") at \$5 per year.

Section 4 -- Set fee for insurance of game at \$1 (per game) (prorata fees for variant games, not to exceed \$3 per game).

Section 5 -- Established procedure for numbering of games in Charter Members.

which was published in DIPSOMANIA #1)?

Strange that you should mention Ancient Greece as providing a good scenario for a Diplomacy-type game -- one of our players (Wayne Hoheisel) is currently hard at work on a Diplomacy-type game involving the Peloponnesian War (which will, hopefully, involve a good deal of tactical play as well as strategic and diplomatic) -- or were you referring to Greece prior to the Peloponnesian War, at the time of the Greek City States?

Should a game such as Diplomacy concentrate on achieving realism in the play? Or simplicity? Or a "happy medium" between the two? Perhaps one of the features which makes Diplomacy popular is its relative simplicity -- but this is done at the sacrifice of a great deal of realism. Take the convoy rules, for example. One of the least realistic situations in the game is that in which a convoy which is stood off from a province (i.e., the army which is being convoyed is stood off) from a province which it is attacking -- and the result of the move is (as far as the army being convoyed is concerned) as if the convoy never started -- in other words, the army remains in the province from which its convoy move was started. Why not allow fleets to carry armies around with them? To get around all of the complications which could result from such "double units", simply state in the rules that the "double unit" of fleet and army only carries the weight of a single unit in any battles in which it may be engaged until such time as the "double unit" separates and returns to two single units. There would, of course, be situations which would need explaining in terms of the rule -- but then, that seems to be the case with many of the rules already in use.

We are not seriously suggesting this revised convoy rule as a replacement for the one already in Diplomacy -- it has not been tested, for one thing -- it is just given as an example as to how the rules could be changed to achieve greater realism without sacrificing much of the game's simplicity.

You mentioned the educational aspect of Diplomacy. This side of games-playing (at least, of war-games-playing) only recently seems to have come into "vogue" among the intelligentsia (excepting, of course, the military "Kriegsspieler" -- if you can call them "intelligentsia") -- spurred on, perhaps, by computers and the development of game theory. Actually, our experience has been that most of the players with whom we have come in contact play games not so much for the educational benefits as for recreation -- in other words, purely and simply, for "fun". Of course (as we stated in our letter which was published in GRAUSTARK #89), what makes a game "fun" will vary from player to player. Some players would choose a game which provided them with an intellectual challenge; others would choose a game for its simplicity, as a respite from the intellectual chores they are called upon to perform in their jobs; still others would choose a game for realism per se, even if the game were so complex as to be virtually unplayable, or so simple as to be completely lacking in challenge.

We agree that now is not the time to rewrite the rules -- far too few games have been played, and far too little testing of alternatives has been done to formally change the rules in the rule book as now written. Eventually some changes are inevitable -- but, for the present, more explanation, examples, etc., of the rules would be sufficient to achieve a greater degree of uniformity in play and in Gamesmaster-interpretation. We might also suggest the rulebook eventually be expanded to include a few suggestions for variant-play on the standard board and using the standard pieces -- this would add to the enjoyment of the game for many.

You state "Where there are ambiguities in the rules at present I feel no hesitation in telling people that the rule is whatever I intended it to be." So, what did you intend these "ambiguous" rules to be? In making our interpretations of

taining most of the land-locked supply centers should have the same effect as a majority of fleets in a water area, but it is much harder to achieve. If a country stays in its water area it may use both its fleets and its armies in the same conflict, but if it goes overland its fleets will be out of play. Usually the only countries that can successfully fight in both water areas at once are France, or some country which has conquered France, or, occasionally, Russia.

Some players believe that there should be a class of alliance, possibly written, which should be binding under the rules. I have always believed that such a thing would be unrealistic. Furthermore, when a player has learned how to devise alliances that are likely to succeed in the environment of the present game, he has really learned something. I understand that a California group experimented with binding alliances and found that they spent the whole game litigating over whether an alliance had been violated or not, and also spent a lot of effort tricking people into agreeing to things they did not really intend. How much simpler is the present game!

Other players object to a lack of protocol. I believe that protocol should arise if it serves a function and not otherwise. If protocol were necessary in order to get an alliance, players would use it. I believe that protocol, credentials, etc., developed largely as a means of determining whether a person was authentic or not. If you had, say, seven floors of a dormitory, each playing a country at the rate of a move a day, then it might be necessary to know whether a given resident of the second floor really spoke for the second floor or not, hence credentials might be necessary. Over a still more vast game, protocol might be necessary. Perhaps we should be relieved that it is not necessary around the "Diplomacy" board.

There has been much talk about rewriting the rules. The very serious problem that arises in connection with a rewrite of the rules is that of latent errors. Mere latent ambiguities, which, I am convinced, are almost inevitable, could sometimes be resolved by referring back to the original rules, although it would be just as easy to keep the existing rules and add explanations. The problem is that the introduction of an actual error that no one noticed at the time would either change the game in some unpredictable way, almost certainly for the worse, since there are a lot of factors in balance in the game now; or else compel some authority or other to rule against the literal wording.

Where there are ambiguities in the rules at present I feel no hesitation in telling people that the rule is whatever I intended it to be. If I am playing in a game when the matter comes up, I usually accept a vote as binding for that game only. But if there is, essentially, an error in the rules -- if they really say something I didn't intend -- I prefer to go along with the written wording. So far that situation has arisen only once, so far as I know, and I was lucky: the literal wording did not result in a bad rule, though my intention was better. I never intended that a piece actually dislodged by an attacker coming from province A could still stand off another piece attempting to enter A, simply by virtue of an order to attack A. That is, however, the rule as written.

If I should be unlucky, in that some literal wording were discovered which would spoil the game, I would not follow the literal wording.

A few strange results occur from time to time under the rules because of the desire to keep the rules simple and to keep their sheer bulk down. Thus the notion that determination of the outcome would not depend on the nationality of the pieces in any way was devised. This result was intellectually pretty, but I actually had to make an exception, to the effect that a country may not drive out its own piece, to keep a country from deliberately securing a retreat in certain positions where a retreat can be a very powerful move (because all the other pieces are frozen in

many suggestions and played many experimental games. Several small changes were made in the rules. At first, a country could have multiple units in its capital or naval base, which were two of its supply centers. Almost an entire duplicate set of rules was necessary to govern the interactions involving these multiple units, which were consequently done away with. The number of provinces within a Great Power was reduced from seven to six. This change speeded up the early mobilization, although it is now a little harder to catch a country completely off guard, because opposite frontiers are closer together. Changes in the map were made, to make the countries more nearly equal, and convoying was made much faster. A large number of ambiguities in the written rules were discovered and disposed of.

A variety of rough-and-ready tactics were developed at this time. One was the "Flying Dutchman", which consisted in playing with a piece to which you were not entitled. It was ruled that this practice was legal so long as it was a deception; i.e., any player had a right to demand restoration of the true position, but if moves had intervened, they could not be taken back. It was never clear what the rights were if the deception were discovered during a move. Players quickly learned not to challenge a "Flying Dutchman" unless its removal was in their interest; sometimes a player might let one survive for several moves, then challenge it when alliances began to shift. The easiest way to put on a "Flying Dutchman" is to raise one when other players are raising, or to "forget" to drop one; but they are sometimes just placed on the board when only yourself or allies are present. Also pieces have been advanced or pushed back, armies have turned into fleets, and so on.

The ploy which came closest to provoking mayhem was move-stealing. After a player had tucked his orders under the board, they were quietly lifted and some other paper put in their place. If other moves had been read before the deception was discovered, it was ruled that the victim could not make out a new set, because he had already seen other moves. Consequently his pieces stood in place. If the theft was coupled with an all-out attack it was very effective, and it had its analog in sabotage of communication lines prior to an attack. One trick which did not get very far occurred when I was playing France and another player had been knocked out as Germany. It was my turn to read when he suddenly began declaiming, "France. Army to Belgium. Fleet to Naples..." and so on. In the ensuing hubbub he claimed that he was the legal government of France and challenged me to prove anything to the contrary.

These tactics seem to have died out with passage of time, except for an occasional "Flying Dutchman", peeking while others write their orders, and so on. For one thing, these practices became dogged and incessant rather than clever, after a while; today they seem to belong to the past. There is no written rule saying that any deception is legal, anyway.

The game was put into its final commercial form and put on the market in 1959. I let contracts for the manufacture of the parts, assembled the sets in my apartment, and sold them however I could. At one time my living room was so full of bundles of boxes that I had only about six inches clearance around three sides of the room; no clearance on the fourth side. As sets were sold it became easier to move around. Games Research took the game over in 1960 and took the last material off my hands.

Postal Diplomacy was begun in 1961 on the initiative of John Boardman. Its surprising development has been very gratifying to me. It provides a channel of communication among many players, which helps to supplement some of the vagaries of the rules and may help to increase the quality of play.